

By Mr Boys. 1775.

T H E
C A S E
O F T H E
INHABITANTS and CORPORATION
O F
The TOWN and PORT
O F
S A N D W I C H,
In the COUNTY of KENT,
TOUCHING A BILL,
LATELY BROUGHT INTO THE
HOUSE of COMMONS,

To enable the Commissioners of Sewers, for several Limits in the Eastern Parts of the County of KENT, more effectually to drain and improve the Lands and Grounds within the GENERAL VALLEYS, and for the better recovering the Scots, authorized to be raised by the Laws of Sewers, within the Limits aforesaid.

C A N T E R B U R Y,
Printed by SIMMONS and KIRKBY.

THE
C A S E
OF THE

IN HABITANTS AND CORPORATION
OF
THE TOWN AND PORT

S A N D W I C H
IN THE COUNTY OF KENT



TOUCHING A BILL
LATELY BROUGHT INTO THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

TO enable the Commissioners of Sewers for several Parishes in the
Parish of the County of KENT, more effectually to drain
and improve the Town and Grounds within the GENERAL
WALLS, and for the better securing the same, and for
other purposes, within the County of Kent.

CANTERBURY
JAMES W. SIMMONDS & CO.

T H E

C A S E o f S A N D W I C H , &c.

THE Bill states that there are in the *General Valleys* from *Fordwich Bridge* to *Sandwich Haven*, upwards of 7000 Acres of Lands and Low Grounds; and, although considerable Sums have been annually raised and expended in draining the said Lands and Grounds, they are frequently overflowed, and, if the Commissioners of Sewers were impowered to make a proper Cut or Drain, (of the Length of forty five Rods or thereabouts) from the River *Stour*, at or near the Saltworks at *Stonar*, into *Sandwich Haven*, the Lands would be much better and more effectually drained, and at less Expence, than they have been for several Years past, and that the Commissioners are desirous to make the said Cut or Drain, and such other Works as shall be necessary for the better and more effectual draining the said Lands; but that Doubts have arisen whether they have sufficient powers by the Laws of Sewers to effect the same.—The Bill (page 3) then impowers the Commissioners to make the Cut, to make proper Floodgates within it, and to make such other Banks, *Wharfs*, *Campshots*, *Cuts*, Drains, Dams, Bridges, Mills, Engines, Sluices, Floodgates, Buildings, Erections, Tunnels and *other Works*, in, upon, or near any Part of the Lands or Grounds within the said Valleys, for the better draining and preserving the said Lands and Grounds, and from Time to Time to alter, remove, rebuild, cleanse and repair the said Banks, &c. as they shall think proper; and, after divers Clauses enabling the Commissioners to appoint Officers, to raise Rates on the Owners or Occupiers of all Lands, &c. scotted to the *General Valleys*, and for other Purposes, there is inserted a Clause (page 13) called a Clause “*to prevent prejudicing Sandwich Haven*” enacting,

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ing, that as soon as the Cut shall be made, and the Floodgates finished and put down, the Commissioners are authorized to cause to be placed, and continued in the River Stour, within Yards of the
 upper End of the Cut, a Poll-bay, with a Needle or Cross-piece through the same, of the Breadth of Inches ; which Needle or Cross-piece
 shall be at the least from the Bed of the River

opposite to the Place where the Poll-bay shall be placed ; and that none of the Floodgates in the Cut shall be opened, until the Water in the Stour shall have risen to the Top of the Needle, nor continue open for a longer Time than till the Water shall be above or even with the Bottom of the Needle : and by the next Clause the Commissioners are to appoint a proper Person to manage the Floodgates, and to order and direct such Person to take particular Care not to draw up, or suffer the Floodgates to be drawn up, or remain open, so as to occasion the Surface of the Water in the Stour opposite the Poll-bay to fall below the Bottom of the Needle : and (page 14) such Manager shall be liable to

for any Neglect of Duty, as any of the Expenditors or other Officers of the Commissioners are liable to for Neglect of Duty, by Virtue of the Laws of Sewers.—The Bill then *states*, that if the Water was suffered to flow up the Cut into the Stour at Spring Tides in all dry Seasons, and the Floodgates shut down when the Water has done flowing, a great Quantity of Water would be forced round the *Port and Harbour* of Sandwich, *which would tend to scour and cleanse the same*, and *enacts*, that the Commissioners shall order the Person, who shall have the Management of the Floodgates to be placed within the Cut, (*if it shall appear to them to be of service to the Harbour and not prejudicial to the Drainage*) to open the Floodgates or any of them at every Spring Tide in all dry Seasons, or Times of short Water, and keep the Floodgates open till the Time of Highwater, and then to shut down all the Floodgates, and to keep them close shut, so as to force the Water in the River round the *Port and Harbour* of Sandwich.

CASE.—To this Bill the Corporation and Inhabitants of the *Town* and Port of *Sandwich*, and many Owners and Occupiers of Lands in other Valleys, which sew into *Sandwich Haven*, object, for the following (amongst other) Reasons :

1st. Be-

1st. Because the Cut, proposed by the Bill, will not effect the Purpose of draining the Valleys.

2d. Because it will exceedingly prejudice, if not totally destroy, the Haven and Harbour of *Sandwich*.

3d. Because there are other more obvious, more simple, more effectual, and less expensive Methods of draining the Valleys, which, it is not much to expect, should be first attempted, before a Scheme is adopted, which will, by its Consequences, destroy the Port of an ancient and respectable Town, ruin its Commerce, and exceedingly distress its Inhabitants and all those who have an Interest in preserving the Navigation there.

And 4th. Because, the Danger to *Sandwich* Harbour being avowed in the Bill, the Remedy proposed is wholly inadequate; and, such as it is, is not to be applied, unless it shall appear to the Commissioners of Sewers to be of Service to the scouring the *Harbour of Sandwich*, and not prejudicial to the Drainage of the Lands in the General Valleys.

To shew that the Cut at *Stonar* will not operate effectually to the Purpose of draining the Valleys, it will be necessary only to state the Situation of them, the Course of the River *Stour*, and the Causes of its frequent Inundations.

The River *Stour*, from *Fordwich* Bridge to the Sea, runs in a narrow Channel and winding Course, through a marshy Plain about one Mile and an half broad at a Medium, there called the Levels, or Valleys, or Meadows indifferently. In a straight line it is about twelve Miles long, and in its winding Course about twenty-one Miles. The Valleys are bounded, on the North and South Sides, by rising Ground that extends nearly to the Sea. A little below *Weatherleaze Hill*, in *Minster* Level, the River takes a sudden Turn towards the South, for about three Miles, as far as the Town of *Sandwich*, and there, turning Northward, forms the Land of *Stonar* into a Peninsula; the Isthmus or Neck, near the Saltwork, being little more than 250 Yards broad. The River from *Sandwich* Bridge to the Sea, to prevent ambiguity, may be called *Sandwich Haven*; from the Bridge to the Saltworks, along the East Side of *Stonar*, *Sandwich Harbour*.

The Causes of the Inundations of the *Stour* are obviously the Slowness of its Stream, the Foulness of its Bed, and the Want of a proper Embankment. It is notorious that the Motion of the *Stour* above the intended Cut, when not swelled by extraordinary Rains, is in most Parts exceedingly slow, owing to the Want of a sufficient Declivity in the Ground through which it runs; the Low-water Mark at the Mouth of the River, with ordinary Neap Tide, being only seventeen Feet perpendicular below the Surface of the Water at *Fordwich* Bridge; which, in a Course of twenty-one Miles, is a very small Descent*. It is as notorious, that no Endeavours have been made use of to cleanse the Bed of the River, especially in those Parts, where the Descent is least and the Quantity of Slub in Consequence greatest. The Weeds, when cut, instead of being removed immediately from the River, have, for the most Part, been constantly suffered to swim down with the Current, and, by adhering when rotten to the Sides and Bottom of the River, have contributed to obstruct its Course and choke up its Channel. The State of the Walls or Banks along the Course of the *Stour* is, beyond Conception, ruinous and neglected. It will scarcely be credited, but it will be proved, that the greatest Part of the Lands in the drowned Levels may be secured from Inundation by simple Reparation of the Walls, at a most inconsiderable Expence. In some of the upper Parts of the Levels, indeed, the Walls are totally obliterated; but if new ones, of a due Height and Substance, were to be made in such Places, at a proper Distance from the River, and if at the same Time the other Banks were put into good Order, all which the Commissioners of Sewers are fully authorised by the Laws of Sewers to do, the Water of the River would be kept within its proper Channel, the Inundations occasioned by the Overflowing of the River would be prevented, and the proposed Cut or Drain be rendered totally unnecessary. The effectual preservation of low Lands by Embankment is clearly evinced in the Case of the Lands at *Stonar*, the *Downs*, *Gosball* Level, *Minster* Level within the *Abbots Wall*, *Lydden* Valley, and *Polders* Levels; all which were drowned Lands, till they were embanked, and are now by Means of embankment kept wholly free from Inundation. Even *Asb* Level, though sometimes flooded from the Imperfections of its own particular Sewer, is yet well de-

* The Descent from *Fordwich* Bridge to the Cut (near 13 Miles) is only 7 Feet, and from the Cut to the Sea (about 8 Miles) is 10 Feet.

fended from the common Source of Inundation, the River, by a substantial Wall *. If the Expence of Embanking be objected to, let it be answered, that the greatest Part of the River is already embanked, and evidently has been so in all its Course from *Fordwich*; and though it may be true that the Banks, in some Parts, have been suffered to be wholly taken away (perhaps by the Occupiers to spread upon the adjacent Land,) in others much neglected and not kept to their proper Elevation, yet it is very credible, that the Expence of restoring the lost Banks, and elevating the rest to a proper Height, would be *considerably less* than that of the proposed Cut with its attendant Operations; and it surely will not be denied, that to concert Schemes for removing an expected Mischief, before proper Measures have been tried to prevent it, is beginning at the wrong End, and wasting Time and Expence in a very injudicious Manner. As a further Proof of the Inefficacy of the proposed Cut at *Stonar*, let us attend a little to the Reasons advanced in Support of it, viz. that it will ~~make the Course of the River into the Sea shorter~~ ^{is the shortest Way of conveying the upland Waters to Sea that it will make}, the Current more rapid, and the Discharge of the Waters greater; neither of these Propositions are true. In the first Place, a Channel may be opened much nearer to the Sea (perhaps with less Prejudice to *Sandwich*) about half a Mile to the Northward of the intended Cut; and, for the others, it is needless to observe, that the Celerity of a Stream in an open Channel, *ceteris paribus*, is in Proportion to the whole Ground over which it runs, and not to the Declivity of another distant Part below it; and it is the Height of the Declivity of the whole Channel taken together, from the Head to where the Stream at last issues, that determines the Velocity of the Stream and the Quantity of Water discharged by it. Very probably the Water near the Cut may be somewhat accelerated, but it can have no Effect on the Motion of the Current at any considerable Distance from it, nor prevent the Overflowing of the River.

		Acres	Roods
* <i>Stonar</i> contains	_____	500	—
The Downs	_____	1200	—
Gosball Level	_____	395	2
Minster Level	_____	1123	—
Lydden Valley	_____	3210	2
Polders Level	_____	424	3
Ash Level	_____	2848	2
		9702	1

near

near to, or within any considerable Distance from, *Fordwich* Bridge; and, as the Inundations begin in the *upper Parts* of the River (which overflow even in Summer Time after a heavy fall of Rain) many Miles above the Cut, and are completed before any Rise is perceived in the River at the Place where the Cut is proposed to be made, how can it be imagined that the Cut can materially, if at all, assist the Drainage of the Levels in these Parts; and, more especially, in the Levels of *Stodmarsh* and *Westbeer*, which contain 716 Acres, and lying, most Parts of them, below the Level of the Surface of the River, even in the driest Seasons, cannot possibly drain into the River, but, when flooded, must remain in that Condition, till their Waters are absorbed by the Earth, or exhaled by the Sun and Wind? In Truth, no Cut at *Stonar*, nor any where else, will drain these Lands. The Mischief of Inundation must be prevented, it can never be removed; and that can only be done by scouring the Bed of the River and raising its Banks. In the mean Time, it must not be forgotten, that two Cuts, the *Long Cut* and *Pould Wood Cut*, have already been made, with a View to the better draining the Levels; and what has been the Consequence? After an heavy Expence incurred in making them, the Levels have not received the least Benefit from them, and continue as long undrained as they were before the Cuts were made.

It is not difficult to shew, that the Cut proposed, or any Cut to lessen the Current of water by *Sandwich*, will tend to the Destruction of its *Harbour*: and we must once more take Leave to say, that the *Port* of an *ancient Town* with its *attendant Commerce* are Objects of too important a Nature to be trifled with and put to the Hazard, in following hasty Speculations and fancied Projects of Improvement, which never may succeed, and certainly never can, but to the Prejudice, if not Destruction of a much more considerable Object, the *Port and Harbour of Sandwich*.

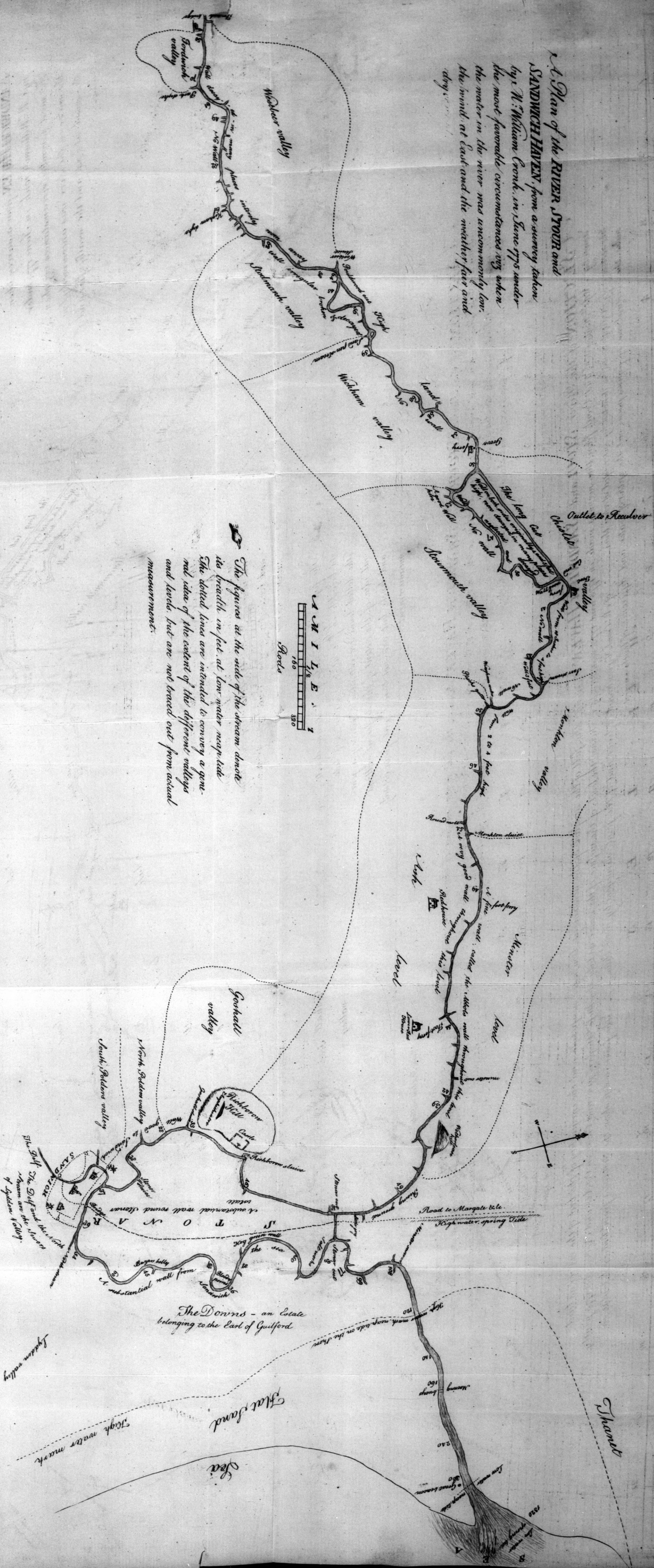
SANDWICH, is a Town of great Antiquity, is one of the *Cinque Ports*, and in the earliest Periods of our History was celebrated for the Goodness of its Haven or Port; all the other Ports upon the Coast of Kent are Members and Creeks of this the Mother Port. Its Importance to the State has been acknowledged and rewarded by Grants of various Privileges and immunities from almost every Monarch since the Conquest. Its Contributions
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of Shipping and Mariners to the Navy of *Great Britain* have been recorded to its Honor; and the Customs or Duties, accruing to the Crown from its Exports and Imports of Merchandize, are so many Proofs of the Extensiveness of its Trade and the peculiar Advantages of its Situation. The Navigation of its River is safe and convenient, and its Harbour very frequently affords Shelter to Vessels in Distress, as well of our own Nation as of foreign Countries. The Number of Vessels resorting to this Port every Year with Merchandize is considerable; those belonging properly to the Inhabitants of the Town form a Nursery of Seamen, from which the Navy is at this Time and always has been supplied with many able Hands. They convey Corn, Grain, Seeds, Hops, Wool, Malt and other Merchandize to the London and other Markets, and Timber to the King's Yards. They furnish Newcastle, *Sunderland*, the Northern Coast of *England*, and the Coast of *Scotland*, with Fruit, Flour, Leather, Oak-bark, Seeds and Ashes. They export to Foreign Parts the Growth and Manufactures of this Kingdom, and bring back to *Sandwich* Grocery, Furniture, Provision, Butter, Iron, Plank, Timber, Lead, Coals, Salt, Spirits, Glass and Earthen-ware, Portland and other Stone, and other Commodities, which it is unnecessary to enumerate. In Times of Scarcity they import large Quantities of Corn from the Continent, to the very great Emolument of the Nation in general, and of the County of *Kent*, and the Town of *Sandwich* with its very extensive Neighbourhood in particular. All which Advantages, as well publick as private, thus connected with *Sandwich*, arise solely from the navigable state of its River or Haven. From hence it may be hoped that the Preservation of the Harbour of *Sandwich* is no inconsiderable Object; and that no Scheme which may hazard the Destruction of it will meet with the Sanction of Parliament.

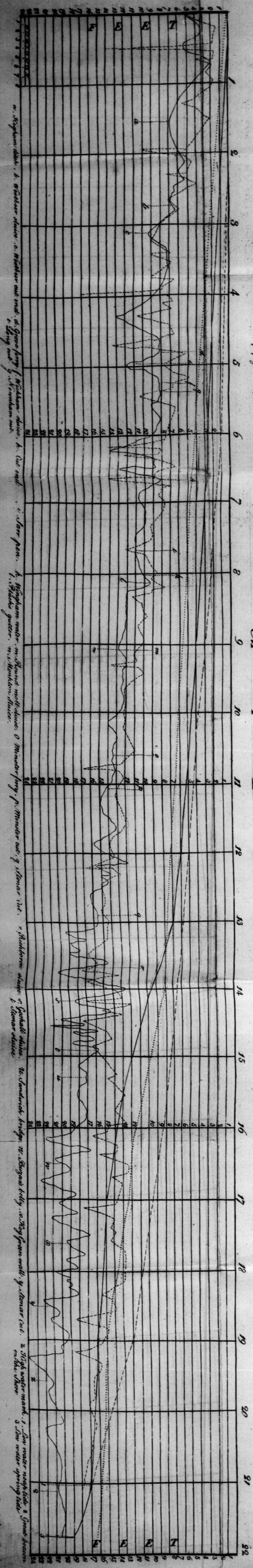
That the Harbour is in manifest Danger of being destroyed, if this Bill passes into a Law, is obvious; for it is a settled Point, that whatever Cause diminishes the Quantity of Water in Rivers must sensibly diminish the Force and Velocity of the Stream; on the Contrary, every Increase of Water as certainly increases the Rapidity. To diminish the Force and Velocity of a Stream is to deprive it, in a certain Degree, of its Power to preserve its Channel in a State proper to conduct it to the place destined for its Reception; every River requires a certain Quantity of Freshes or Back Water to scour its Channel; and no Man, no Surveyor, however eminent,
can

can determine a priori, or with a Glance of his Eye, what that Quantity is, and how much of it can be spared to make Experiments with. *The greatest Evil* to Sandwich Harbour and the *drowned Levels* is, *that a sufficient Quantity of Freshes does not now come down to Sandwich.* Was the Water, which is now suffered to spread over the Levels, confined to the River by Walls, the *Harbour* no doubt would be greatly improved. It is a known Fact, that in Summer Time the Haven of Sandwich is fuller of Mud than in Winter, the Vessels lie higher at the Wharfs, and the Channel is narrower; and this is owing materially to the Slowness of the Current of the River, which then permits the Sand and Mud that are carried along with it to subside more easily there, and form Banks along the side of the Channel, by which it is contracted into much narrower Dimensions and rendered much less commodious to shipping than it otherwise would be; and were it not for the extraordinary Quantity of Water that comes down in Winter and carries off the collected Mud, Sandwich Harbour would soon fill up so as to be capable of receiving only Boats or Vessels of the smallest Size. If then the Cut should take Place, the *Harbour* will be deprived of the only Means of cleansing it, viz. the extraordinary Freshes in the Winter. The Consequence of which will be, the Mud and Banks collected there in one Summer, instead of being diminished, will be increased in the Winter, and receive a greater Addition the next Summer; in the mean while, they get more solid and more difficult to remove; and in a very short Time the Harbour will in Course stop up, the River will flow wholly through the Cut, Vessels can no longer come up to Sandwich to receive or deliver their Cargoes, but must stop at the End of the proposed Cut, whereby the Trade of the Town of Sandwich will be diverted to a new Town, that must rise by the Side of the Cut upon the Stonar Estate, to the great Benefit and Advantage of *that Estate*, no Doubt, but to the Ruin of the present *Town*, and the great Detriment and Inconvenience of the *adjacent Country*. Well aware of these probable Consequences to the Harbour of Sandwich, the Framers of the Bill have artfully thrown in some clauses, which they wish to have received as an effectual Security against them, viz. the placing a Poll-bay, with a Needle, or Cross-piece, in the River Stour, and not suffering the Floodgates to be open, but when the Water shall be above, or even with the Bottom of the Needle. Admitting (which but for the Sake of argument can never be done) that this would prevent all
Prejudice

A Plan of the RIVER STOUR and
SANDWICH HAVEN, from a survey taken
by M^r William Smith, in June 1775 under
the most favorable circumstances; viz. when
the water in the river was uncommonly low,
the wind at East and the weather fair and
clear.



A SECTION of the River STOER and SANDWICH HAVEN showing the fall of the surface of the stream as low water neap tide and the inequality of the bed of the river as laid down by Mr. Bingham and Crank from their surveys made in 1773 and 1775 respectively, likewise the level of the surface of the water as taken by Mr. Bingham jun. and Crank in October and November 1775 jointly. The section of Mr. Bingham now is denoted by interrupted strokes, thus ----- of Mr. Crank by continued lines, and of the joint surveyors by dots, thus The figures a b p q show the vertical runs of figures, and the depths of water and difference of levels in feet. I L E S



Prejudice to the Harbour of Sandwich, it might have been expected, that those concerned in its Welfare should have, at least, a concurrent Authority with the Commissioners of Sewers to see it carried into Execution: on the contrary, the Appointment, the Pay, the Inspection, and Punishment of the Officer to be employed for that purpose belong wholly to them; to the Corporation of Sandwich nothing is left but Complaint in Case of Neglect of Duty; and before the Complaint can be heard, the Mischief will be effected. But not contented with saving the Town of Sandwich from Ruin, they are so good as to offer it a Benefit, by shutting the Floodgates at Spring Tides, in dry Seasons, after the Water has done flowing, and by that Means forcing a great Quantity of Water round the Port and Harbour of Sandwich; to which it may be answered, that the Quantity of Back-water gained in the River in the Course of an Hour and an Half of Flood, will bear no Proportion to, or in any Degree compensate what will be lost from the River at other Times, through the Floodgates, during the Ebb. But it is not worth while to use many Words upon the Occasion, since, unluckily for the People of Sandwich, even this miserable Expedient is not to be adopted, but under the Control of the Commissioners, and, *only*, if it shall appear to them to be of Service to the Harbour of Sandwich, *and not prejudicial to their more important Object, the Draining of the Levels in the General Valleys.*

Upon the whole, when it is considered that the Friends of the Bill are now adopting a Plan so lately found ineffectual for the Purpose intended, are so averse to try the common Mode of embanking, are fixing on a Spot to make a Cut through, as the best and shortest Way, when it is evident, that Half a Mile to the Northward of it, there is a Place much better for the Purpose, and which would make the Course of the Water into the Sea above a Mile shorter, one would be almost led to think the Benefit of the Levels was not the sole or principal Object of the first Projectors of this Scheme; which, threatening infinite Mischief to Sandwich and the adjacent Country, promises very little Probability of Benefit to any but the Owners of the Stonar Estate; who it must be confessed, would be greatly benefited by the Destruction of the Harbour of Sandwich, which this Plan, if carried into Execution, will be very likely to effect; and therefore for these, and for other Reasons which will be offered to the House, the Inhabitants and Corporation of Sandwich (being fully prepared with Proofs of the Facts above alledged) rely on the Wisdom and Justice of Parliament not to permit the Bill to pass into a Law.



Mr. Hartley
John Jones